

THE  
*True Reformation of Manners,*  
OR THE  
NATURE and QUALIFICATIONS  
OF  
**True Zeal:**  
IN A  
**S E R M O N**

Preach'd in the Parish-Church of  
**B R I D G W A T E R :**

Occasion'd by a more than ordinary Con-  
course of Dissenters there, upon that  
Pretence.

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By **MATTH. HOLE**, B. D. And Vicar of *Stokegurfy*  
in *Somerſetſhire*.

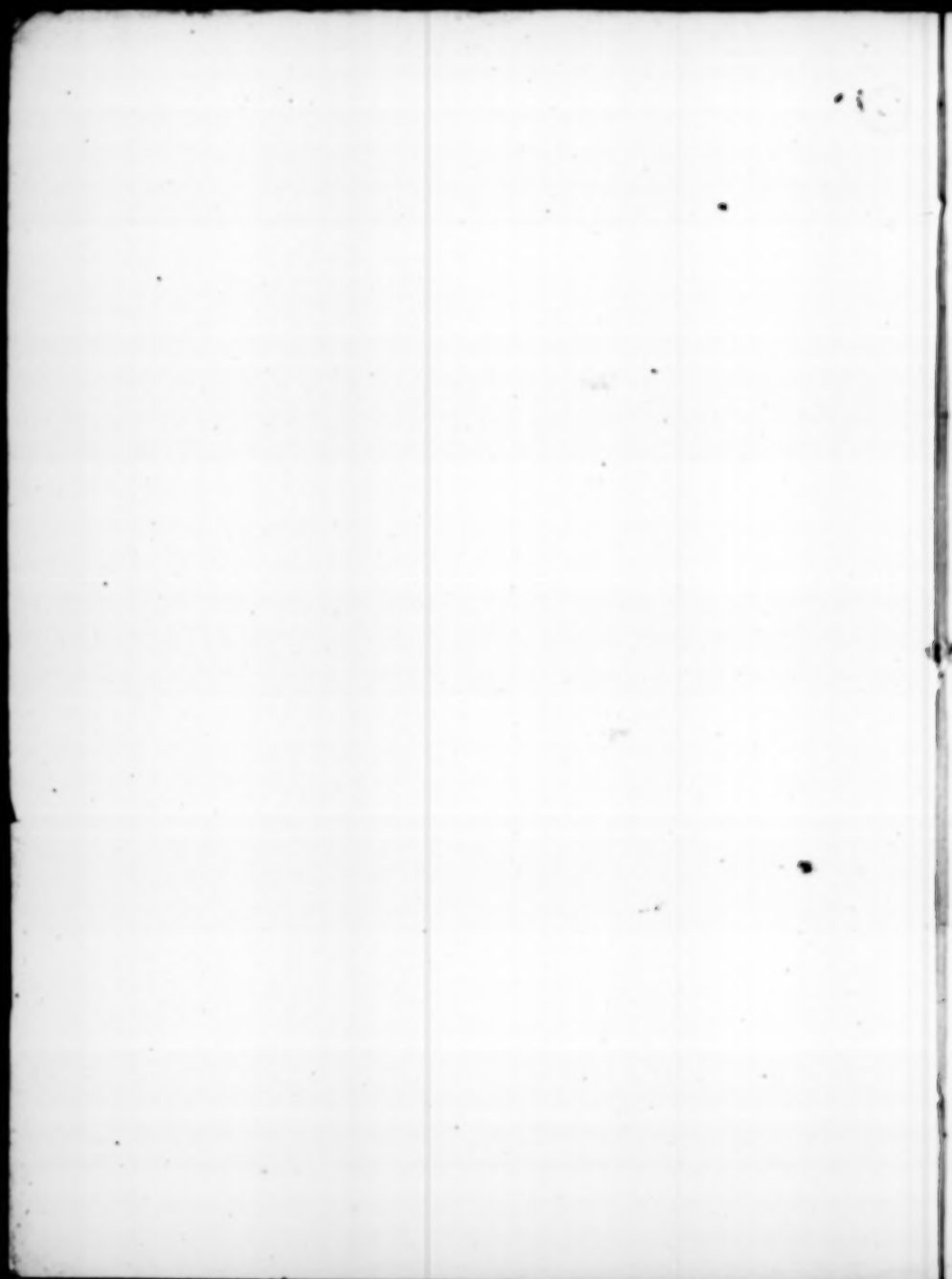
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2 King. 10. 16. *Come with me, and ſee my Zeal for the Lord.*

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TO THE  
READER.

**T**HE design of the ensuing Discourse, is not to hinder, but promote Reformation, by directing to the true way and means conducing thereunto: Neither is there any thing in it to Reproach, but only to Regulate our Zeal, which derives all its Goodness from the Object, or End to which it is directed; and like Fire, is either useful or dangerous, according as it keeps, or leaves its due place and bounds.

I know 'tis hard, and perhaps improper too, to treat coldly of this Subject, which is apt to excite a Warmth in the Speaker, and to enkindle also some Heat in the Hearers: And therefore 'twill require no small Skill, to know the true limits and measures of this Vertue, and likewise no less Care to observe and keep within them.

For private Persons to be very solicitous about the amending their own Ways, and reforming their particular Errors and Vices, is a very commendable Property and Duty of a good Christian: But for such to be over-busy and clamorous about the Reforming others, is many times to go out of their Station, and to meddle with things that appertain not to them. True Reformation, like Charity, begins at home, and makes Men more careful to correct their own Faults, than to pry into and censure the Manners of others: Such Cenfores morum had need have not only sufficient Authority, but an exemplary and unspotted Integrity; lest their own Mis-carriages should upbraid the forwardness of their Zeal, and confute their goodliest Pretences.

They that can allow themselves in the hainous Sins of Schism, Division and Disobedience, may indeed talk and pretend much to Reformation, but can never be true Reformers: Such a preposterous Zeal hath commonly very bad Designs conceal'd under it; and

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## TO THE READER.

'tis well known what direful Evils have been contrived and acted under this mask of Reformation: So that we are concern'd to watch our Zeal, as we do our Fire, lest it grow headstrong and exorbitant, and set not only whole Houses, but whole Kingdoms in a Combustion; that we be not twice deceiv'd by the same Artifice.

I hope this warm Subject hath not transported me beyond the Bounds of Reason and Meekness in the handling of it; and that no wise Reader will see any just cause to complain of it, as Satyrical or Sarcastical.

To rectify a mistaken Zeal, and prevent the Danger of it, were the sole Ends of Preaching this Sermon; and to answer the Requests of some, and remove the Prejudices of others, were the true Reasons of its Publication.

FAREWEL.

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A SER-



# A Sermon, &c.

GALAT. IV. Part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Verse.

*It is good to be Zealously affected always in a good thing.*

THE occasion of these Words, was from some false Teachers, that had crept into the Churches of *Galatia*, with a design to destroy the Credit of the Apostle, and the Doctrine deliver'd by him : To which end they preach'd up *Circumcision*, and other Rites and Ceremonies of *Moses's* Law, on purpose to undermine the Truths of the Gospel.

In this Attempt they prevail'd so far, as to shake the Faith of many, who began to decry the Apostle, and to cry up those deceitful Teachers above him. This put St. *Paul*, in this Chapter, upon reasoning the Case with them, ver. 16. *Am I become your Enemy because I tell you the Truth? i. e.* Am I become vile and despicable in those eyes, which you would, not long since, have pluck'd out and given to me? How comes this change to be made in you, that the great Love

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you lately bore to my Person and Doctrine, is thus of a sudden turn'd into a Hatred of both? Why, he found that an *Enemy* had done this; *i. e.* Those false Teachers, taking the opportunity of his Absence, had planted their Tares, to hinder the growth of that good Seed he had sow'd among them; and therefore with great earnestness cautions these *Galatians* against them, as the great enemies of their Faith and Salvation; letting them know, that whatever shew they might make of *Zeal* towards GOD, or Affection towards them, there was nothing under it, but Falshood and Hypocrisy. *They Zealously affect you*, saith he, ver. 17. *but not well*: There is no Sincerity in their goodliest Pretences, and in all they say or do, their Love is not to you, but themselves; Yea, *They would exclude you*, (saith he) *that you might affect them*: meaning, that they would shut you out from the true Faith, that you might affect their Persons, and embrace their Errors. Wherefore he wills them to beware of them, and to shun them as Cheats and Impostors; and from their false and counterfeit *Zeal*, takes occasion to recommend True *Zeal* to them, in the Words of the Text: *But it is good to be Zealously affected always in a good thing*. In treating of which Words, I must enquire,

*First*, Into the Nature of *Zeal*, and shew what it is to be *Zealously affected*.

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, I must speak to the two Qualifications of true *Zeal* mention'd in the Text; the one respecting the Time of its continuance, which must be *always*; the other, the Object about which it is to be employ'd, which is a *good thing*.

*Thirdly*, I must shew the Goodness or Excellency of true *Zeal* from those Words, *It is good to be Zealously affected*, &c.

*Fourthly*, I must lay open some of the Mistakes and Miscarriages of *Zeal*, and then conclude with an Inference or two from the whole.

I begin then with the Enquiry into the Nature of *Zeal*, that we may see what it is to be Zealously affected; and here we may note,

First, That *Zeal*, in the general Notion of it, is a *warmth of Mind*, that carries it out in an eager pursuit of its Object, accompanied with Indignation at any thing that opposes, or lies in its way: And this is sometimes in Scripture, and other Authors, taken in a bad sense, for Emulations, Wrath, and bitter Envyings: St. James makes mention of *πικρὸς ζῆλος*, a *bitter Zeal*, proceeding from an over-heated and exasperated Mind, and is translated, *bitter Envyings*, Jam. 3. 14. St. Paul reckons *ζῆλοι*, which is render'd, *Emulations*, among the works of the flesh, Gal. 5. 20. This is an inordinate heat of the Soul, whereby 'tis carried out too eagerly after some earthly,

sensual Objects or Designs. But passing by this, we are now to treat of a Religious *Zeal*, which is a *warm and powerful Inclination of the Mind after Heaven and Heavenly things*. For the better understanding whereof, we must note,

2<sup>ly</sup>, That *Zeal* is not any one single Passion or Affection, but a mixture or composition of more; 'tis made up chiefly of Love and Anger, together with those intermediate Passions, of Desire, Joy, Indignation, and the like, that partake of both. The first and great Ingredient of *Zeal* is Love, for none can be Zealously affected to any thing, which he doth not truly love; and where that is, 'twill draw after it a desire of attaining and enjoying it; and according to the degrees of love will the desire encrease, and improve into longings and impatience. Again,

*Zeal* is accompanied with Joy and Delight in pleasing and possessing what it makes after, and where the Object is infinite, as when 'tis plac'd on GOD, it advances into Extasy and Rapture. Furthermore,

*Anger* is an Ingredient of *Zeal*, which sets the Soul against whatever opposes the thing Beloved; and proportionable to the opposition, does the Anger encrease, arising sometimes to Wrath and Indignation, and upon any frustration 'tis attended with Grief and Sorrow.

Thus is *Zeal compounded* of various and different

ferent Passions, upon the well or ill *tempering* and *mixing* whereof, does the goodness or badness of *Zeal* depend. That *Zeal* that hath the greatest mixture of the mild, loving and charitable Affections is commonly the best ; that wherein the harsh, soure and hot Passions are most predominant, is very often inordinate: And that, where the angry Passions not only exceed, but exclude the more calm and benign Ones, is generally sinful. Moreover, *Zeal* is not only a composition of sundry Passions, but a *high degree* and *intention* of them, and bespeaks not barely the *reality*, but a *fervency* of Affection; 'tis such a warmth of Mind, as influences the *whole* Man, and renders all the Powers of the Soul more *vigorous* and *lively* in its desires and prosecutions; and so 'tis oppos'd to Coldness and Lukewarmness.

So that true *Zeal* is a gracious constitution of the whole Mind, and is rather a *constellation* of Graces, than *one particular* Grace, 'tis what Health is to Life, the spring of all its activity and motion; and resembles that Heroick Vertue describ'd by the Moralists, which is not so much a *distinct* Vertue of its self, as the *highest pitch* and *eminence* of all other Vertues.

From this brief description of *Zeal* we may learn, what it is to be *Zealously affected*; namely, to have the Mind warmly stirring or moving in earnest desires, and an eager pursuit of some  
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suitable and desirable Object, and consequently two things must concur to this zealous Affection, viz. Light in the head, and Heat in the heart.

*First*, To be Zealously affected implies light and knowledge in the Head, for *Ignoti nulla Cupido*, None can affect that, of which he hath no knowledge. Light is the Director of *Zeal*, without which 'twill mistake its Object, and necessarily go awry. 'Tis a *blind Zeal*, that is void of Knowledge, and therefore what Light is to the Eye, that Knowledge is to the Soul, it shews its way, and guides all its operations. Again,

*Secondly*, To be Zealously affected imports not only light in the Head, but heat in the Heart; and therefore 'tis often compar'd to Fire, whose property it is to warm and enliven, *St. Paul* styles it *a fervency of Spirit*, Rom. 12. 11. which signifies such an inward warmth of Mind, as *cherishes* in it a spiritual Life, quickens Vertue, and makes us *grow in Grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. In short, Zeal is a vehement Affection, or a strong Byass and Propensity of the Soul towards its Object; and to be Zealously affected, is to be carried out with earnest Desires and Endeavours after it; not without some Hatred, Trouble and Indignation at whatsoever does hinder or oppose it. This is the Nature of *Zeal*. But

How must it be qualify'd, that it may be good  
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to be thus Zealously affected? Why, our Text mention two Qualifications to make it so.

The one respects the *Time* of its continuance, it must be *always*; the other, the *Object*, it must be in a *good thing*.

First, To be Zealously affected aright, it must be *always*, not *now and then*, By fits and starts; but keeping up an ardent flame of Love, still burning in our Breasts. The Apostle supposes here, that these *Galatians* were well enough affected whilst he was *present* with them, but it did not continue in his *absence*, it soon wore off, and therefore he wills them to be Zealously affected *always*. They who still frequent and keep close to the Worship and Communion of the Church, may be well enough suppos'd to be Zealously affected towards it; but they who come to it only *to serve a turn*, may be justly thought otherwise; yea, when they who seldom or never attend the publick Worship, *of a sudden, on a particular occasion*, flock in great Numbers to it; and with that Formality and Appearance too, as if, with *Jehu*, they would alarm Spectators, to *come and see their Zeal for the Lord of Hosts*: This is very suspicious, and looks more like the result of *Contrivance* and *Design*, than the effect of *true and sound Religion*. For true Zeal is *permanent* and *lasting*; it proceeds from a *vital* Principle within, which will maintain a kindly and  
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constant heat in the Soul; 'tis not like the fits of an Ague, that come and go again, but like the *Altar Fires*, that were always kept burning, or the *Vestal Flames*, that never went out: 'tis true indeed, it may, and does admit of *intermissions*, but 'tis never *extinguish'd*; but like the natural heat of the Heart, 'twill abide as long as Life continues. All that seeming Zeal of the Hypocrite, that so often wears off, and grows *cold* again, is but false Fire, 'tis only a *painted*, and no *real* Flame.

If you observe it, you shall find some Men at *some* Times, and in *some* religious Exercises, exceeding warm and zealous, their Affections seem all *in a flame*, and themselves under the transports of Divine Love; who yet in a little time grow cold again, and have no appearance of Life or Heat left in them. These are only *paroxysms* of Zeal, and the *preternatural heats* of the Hypocrite's Devotion, whereas true Zeal is ever more *uniform* and *lasting*; and where the Spirit is truly *touch'd with this Coal from the Altar*, 'twill preserve an habitual constant light and heat in the Soul. To ~~this~~ end, Zeal must be sober and well temper'd, not over hot and violent; for *Nullum violentum est perpetuum*, No violent thing is lasting: Such transports spend the Spirits too fast, to continue long; Nature struggles under any violence, and labours to be eas'd



eas'd and rid of it, and Religion too groans under  
 such violent *fits* of Zeal, and cannot long con-  
 tinue in such *extreams*; and therefore such tran-  
 sient fiery heats are far from the sobriety of Re-  
 ligion, and the temper of true Devotion. The  
 Prophet resembles some Men's Righteousness to  
 the *Morning Cloud, and the early Dew that soon*  
*passeth away*; and we may liken others to a flash  
 of Lightning, which gives a short blaze, but is  
 quickly out. The Apostle observes of some of these  
*Galatians*, that *they ran well for a time* in their  
 Christian Course; but they soon waxed faint and  
 tired, and so lost the Prize, for not holding out  
 to the end of the Race. Christianity is often in  
 Scripture styl'd a *Warfare*, in which, you know,  
 'tis not the furious *Charge*, but the deliberate  
*Courage and Constancy* that wins the Field: In  
 like manner, 'tis *Perseverance* only, that com-  
 mends our Zeal, and crowns our Actions with  
 success and victory. And therefore the Apostle  
 wills us to *hold on* in our Christian Course, and  
 to be zealously affected *always*, even to the end;  
 which is the first Qualification of true Zeal. The  
 second respects the *Object* about which it is con-  
 versant, and that must be a *good thing*: *It is*  
*good to be zealously affected always in a good*  
*thing*; where we are taught to measure the *good-*  
*ness* of our Zeal, not by the *height* of the *Passions*  
 of which 'tis compos'd; but by the *goodness* of

the thing, about which 'tis employ'd. And here two things are to be observ'd for the better clearing of this Matter: As,

First, The object of our Zeal may be sometimes a thing that is *evil*, and yet a Zeal about it may be a *good* and *commendable* thing; as for example, All Sin in general, and particularly Atheism, Profaneness, Sacrilege, Schism, and the like, are all very *bad* things; and yet to be zealous against these, is to be Zealously affected in a *good* thing: but here the Zeal consists, not in the *love*, but *hatred* of them, not in *practising*, but *punishing* of them; yea, the *worse* the thing is, the *better* is the *Zeal* that is employ'd against it: Thus the more bold and daring any Sin or Wickedness is grown, the higher act of Zeal is it, to oppose and suppress it. Again,

Secondly, A thing may be materially good, and yet a Zeal about it may be sometimes a very bad thing; as for instance, All acts of Religion in general, and particularly Praying, Hearing, Reformation of Manners, and the like, are all *very good* things; and yet a *seeming* Zeal about them, may be sometimes a very evil and pernicious thing; as when they are embas'd by bad Ends, and made use of to promote evil Designs: you know the Pharisees *made long Prayers, the better to devour Widows houses*; you cannot be ignorant, how some upon occasion attend the publick

lick Worship, only to *qualify* them for an *Office*, and take the holy Sacrament, to enable them to *undermine* the Communion of the Church. Do not some talk much of *reforming* the Manners of others, without any regard at all to their own? 'Tis no new thing to pretend *Reformation*, to carry on very bad Designs; and we all know what vile things have been acted under a *cloak* and colour of Religion: so that a great *talk* and *appearance* for Reformation, may be rather Collusion, than Zeal; and a pompous shew of Religion about it, may be rather a mocking, than serving of God.

In short, A thing may be *materially* good, and carry a fair *shew* of being so; and yet may want many Qualifications, that are necessary to make it *really* and *in truth* such. It may proceed from a bad *Principle*, be carried on by bad *Means*, and tend to a bad *End*; either of these may spoil the goodness of the thing, and marr the *Zeal* that is employ'd about it. The Object then of *Zeal* may be good and evil, and a hearty loving of the *one*, and hating the *other*, will justify our *Zeal* in *both*: for as Goodness hath charms enough to engage the Affections, so Sin hath deformity enough to beget dislike and averſation; and consequently to be zealous *for* the one, and *against* the other, is in both to be zealously affected in a good thing.

But to come to particulars: What are those good or evil things, about which our Zeal may be thus *lawfully* and *laudably* employ'd? I shall mention some of the *chief* of them, the better to direct you in these great and weighty Matters of Religion. As,

First, To be zealous for the *Glory of God*, and the *Honour of his Laws*, is to be zealously affected in a good thing. The Glory of God is the great end of our Creation; and as the Almighty ever propounds it to *Himself*, so ought *we* to make it the principal aim and scope of all our Actions: *Whether ye eat or drink* (saith the Apostle) *or whatever ye do, do all to the praise and glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. This is to be the chief care and business of our Lives, in which if we are sincere, we cannot easily exceed; for the highest degrees of all *pious Affections*, are to be fix'd on God: He is to have our most ardent Love, our strongest Desire, our firmest Hope, our purest Joy; all which, when screw'd up to the highest pitch, fall vastly short of the infinite Perfections of his Nature, and our great Obligations to his Goodness. And therefore our Minds should be eagerly bent on things, whereby God may be *glorified*, that his Power, Wisdom and Goodness may be celebrated in the World, and his Praises sound to the ends of the Earth. Again, We are to set our selves with all our might and main a-  
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gainst those things, whereby GOD may be *dishonoured*, his Name *prophan'd*, his Worship *neglected* or *contemn'd*: we are to have a tender love and esteem for GOD's *Laws*, and be deeply affected with the breach and violation of them: These are *proper* Matter for our *Zeal*, and are to be prosecuted with the utmost warmth and vigour of all our Faculties; and when we stand thus affected to the Honour of GOD, and his Laws, then may we be truly said to be *zealously affected in a good thing*; yea, in the *chiefest* good, and the *best* of things.

Secondly, To be zealous for the *Honour* of CHRIST, and the *Doctrine* deliver'd by *Him*, is to be *zealously affected in a good thing*. This is the Zeal here recommended by *St. Paul*, namely, To strive for the *Truths* of the Gospel, against those false Teachers, that would subvert or undermine them. And herein, we of *this Age* ought to be more than ordinarily zealous, when the Being and Divinity of CHRIST are both call'd in question, and the Mysteries of the Gospel not only *denied*, but *derided*. Is not a *Crucified* Saviour once more become a *stumbling block* to some, and to others *foolishness*? And do not too many use their Tongues and Wits, in decrying all Divine Revelations? And is it not time to appear for Christ, and his Religion, in such a profane and dissolute Age? *St. Jude* exhorts Christi-

Christians to *Contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints* ; and elsewhere we are charg'd, not to let go, but to *hold fast the Profession of our Faith, without wavering* ; meaning, that we should not *betray* it by Cowardise, nor *corrupt* it with Error, nor suffer it to be lost or swallowed up by Infidelity ; but to come forth in the defense of the Truth, against all its Adversaries ; to use our utmost endeavours, in our several Stations, to vindicate the Honour of our SAVIOUR, if ever we hope to be sav'd by him : *He that denies me before Men, (saith Christ himself) him will I deny before my Father that is in Heaven.* Now to *disown* the Truths of the Gospel, or to *refuse* to *appear* in the defense of them, when call'd in question, is indeed no better than to *deny* him : And what can such expect, but to be for ever *disown'd* and *deny'd* by him at the last day ? Wherefore 'tis both the Duty and Interest of all that are called Christians, to be zealous for the *Honour of Christ*, to vindicate his Truths, and to adorn his Doctrine with a holy Conversation.

Thirdly, To be zealous for the *Church of God*, is to be zealously affected in a *good* thing : And that as the Church is sometimes taken for the *House of God*, and likewise for the orderly Constitution of Divine *Worship* perform'd in it ; both which are proper Matter to employ our Zeal.

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That ardent Love we owe to God, requires us to love the things of God, and to have a due regard to all that belongs to him ; among which, we are commanded to *hallow his Sabbath, and to reverence his Sanctuary*. David tells us, that the *Zeal of God's house had even consumed him*, Psal. 69. 9. He was so passionately affected towards the *reverence and decency* of those Places, that he thought he could not better shew his Honour to God, than by reverencing the *place* where his Honour dwells. After that we read, what time, care and cost King *Solomon* bestow'd in building and beautifying the Temple ; by which, he at once erected an Habitation for the Glory of his Maker, and a lasting Monument of his own Honour.

But lest any should take this only for a piece of *Old-Testament Zeal*, we find our Blessed Saviour so zealous for the honour of the Temple, that he *never* discover'd a higher act of Indignation, than against the *Prophaners* of it ; for himself whipp'd the Buyers and Sellers out of it, who had made the *House of Prayer a Den of Thieves*, overturning the Tables of the Money-changers, and the Seats of them that sold Doves ; and that with an Indignation too, so much beside his ordinary temper, that the Disciples could not but call to mind, and apply to him, what was prophesied of him, *The Zeal of thy house hath eaten me*

*me up.* By this great example we learn, that a true Christian Zeal may be *well* employ'd about the purifying of God's *house*, and securing it from all profanation. Moreover, we find the Apostles extremely zealous for the *Peace* and *Unity* of the Church, as also for the *comeliness*, *order* and *reverence* of the *publick* Worship us'd in it: So that to be zealous against *Sacrilege*, which is the polluting of God's holy Temple; and likewise against *Schism*, which is the dividing the Body of Christ, is a *pious, well-grounded* and *commendable* Zeal.

Fourthly, To be zealous in the *Cause*, and for the Honor of God's *Ministers*, is to be zealously affected in a *good* thing; for these belong to him as his *Ambassadors*, and therefore are to be lov'd and treated accordingly: *Let men so account of us* (saith the Apostle) *as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, and for that reason to be counted *worthy of double honor*: The Kindness or Contempt shew'd to them redounds to *him* that sends them; for *He that despises you* (saith Christ) *despises me, and he that despises me, despiseth him that sent me*; and therefore our Zeal for Christ and his Truth, may and ought to be exprest by espousing the Cause of his *Ministers*, especially when the great Contempt of Religion hath occasion'd too great a Contempt of the Dispensers of it.

Lastly,



Lastly, To be zealous for the *People* of God, that is, for their Happiness and Salvation, is to be zealously affected in a *good* thing: Next to the Glory of God, and our own Salvation, we are to tender the Welfare and Salvation of *others*; and this is to be done by our good Wishes, hearty Prayers, and best Endeavours for them: we find *Moses* so far transported with love and desire towards the *Israelites*, that he prefer'd their publick Happiness and Salvation, before the private welfare of his own Soul, praying thus in their behalf, either *blot* out their *Sins*, or *blot* out *my name*, *out of the book that thou hast written*, Ex. 32. 32. Under the like transport of Affection we find *St. Paul* declaring, that his *Hearts desire and Prayer unto God was*, that *Israel might be saved*; withal wishing himself *accursed from Christ*, for his *Brethren and Kinsfolk according to the flesh*, Rom. 9. 3. which great Examples recommend to us, if not so high a pitch of *Zeal*, yet a most ardent love and desire of doing good to all men; and especially to use our best endeavours to save their *Souls*, which is the greatest good that we can do them; herein we shall tread in the steps of our *Blessed Saviour*, who *went up and down doing good* both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, which is such a noble, generous and beneficial piece of Charity, as very well deserves our utmost Zeal and Vigour.

In a word, To be zealous in the Cause of Religion, against Atheism and Profaneness; to be zealous for the Word of God, against Deism and Infidelity; for the House and Worship of God, against Schism and Sacrilege; for the People of God, against Seducers that *lay in wait to deceive*, is to be zealously affected in *good* things, and is highly becoming all such as are called by the Name of Christ, and would advance the Honour and Interest of Christianity; which things require not only *unwearied Diligence*, but undaunted *Courage* and *Resolution* to effect them; and therefore to engage and encourage you to set about them, I shall proceed to the

Third thing to be consider'd in our Text, *viz.* The goodness and excellency of *true Zeal*, from those words, *It is good to be zealously affected, &c.* 'Tis *good* to *our selves*, for thereby we become like unto God, and imitate the Divine Goodness; 'tis *good unto others*, for as one Coal kindles another, so one man's Zeal helps to quicken another's, and blows up both into a bright and useful Flame: 'tis *good* to a *whole Church and Country*, who share in the benefit, and reap the fruits of a well-guided Zeal; yea, 'tis *good* in all the fences of Goodness, for 'tis *Bonum honestum, utile & jucundum*, 'tis pious, profitable and pleasant; 'tis the *top and perfection* of all Vertue, the *beauty, strength and ornament* of all Religion, and adds,

as I may say, a Grace to all other Graces.

Indeed, what Heat is to the Body, that is Zeal to the Soul; the very *life, health* and *vigour* of it, the source of all its activity and motion: and as the Body without Heat, is but a heavy, lumpish Carcase, so the Soul without Zeal, is sluggish and unactive, and little better than *dead in trespasses and sins*. But the Goodness of Zeal may be best seen in the *good Effects* produc'd by it, and the greatness of the Reward annex to it.

First, I say, the Goodness of Zeal may be seen in the *good Effects* produc'd by it: Great and noble things have been atchiev'd by fervent Zeal; it hath inspir'd the Soul with vigour and courage, strong enough to conquer the greatest difficulties, and to carry it above and beyond all opposition: by this *Lot* deferr'd the destruction of *Sodom*, and had there been a few more such, it would have prevented that direful Conflagration that consum'd them: For as one heat draws out another, so the fire of *true Zeal* weakens the fire of *God's jealousy*, and keeps his *wrath* from breaking forth. *Phinehas's* Zeal stopt the fury of the destroying Angel, caus'd the Plague to cease, and restor'd Health and Peace unto *Israel*. The time would fail me, to rehearse the many and great things that have been effected by it, for the honour of *God*, the welfare of his Church, and the safety of his People: neither indeed can it

be otherwise, for *Zeal* kindles the flames of Love in the Breast of our Maker, and draws his Affections to us ; it engages him of our side, and *if God be for us, who can be against us?* Nothing can be too great for his infinite *Goodness* to grant, and nothing can be too hard for his infinite *Power* to effect for us.

But the Goodness of *Zeal* will more fully appear, in the *greatness of the Reward* annex to it hereafter ; when our imperfect desires of promoting *God's* Glory now, will end in the advancement of our own ; when the little sparks of *Zeal* here, will improve into a celestial Fire, which will still burn in *our* Breasts towards *God*, and in *His* towards *us*. In a word, This zealous disposition will prepare and qualify us for the blissful Regions above, where our present faint Praisings of *God*, shall be advanc'd into extasy and rapture ; and we, like the *Seraphims*, shall dwell for ever in the pure and unquenchable flames of Divine Love : Which, whoever well considers, will see abundant cause to say with the Apostle, that *'Tis good to be Zealously affected always in a good thing.*

Thus having shew'd the *Nature* and *Properties* of true *Zeal*, the Passions of which 'tis compos'd, the things about which it is to be employ'd, together with the goodness and excellency of it, when so qualify'd ; I proceed now to consider some  
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of those *dangerous Mistakes* and *Miscarriages* of Zeal, that are to be found in the World; and these are indeed but too many, of which I shall mention a few: To which end you may observe,

First, That *Zeal* being compounded of the two *ruling Passions* of the Soul, *Love* and *Anger*, may and often does admit of two *extreams*; the one in the *excess*, when 'tis over-hot and eager; the other in the *defect*, when 'tis too cold or lukewarm; and 'tis too frequent and easy for Men to fall into one of these: The first is an inordinate *heat* in Religion, which transports Men beyond the true bounds, and runs it into spiritual *Fury* and *Enthusiasm*; of this kind was that of the *Jewish Zealots*, who pretending to a secret Impulse from above, did many vile and enormous things, committing Riots, Rapins, Murders, and so destroy'd the Temple by an irregular Zeal in defending it; which intemperate heat of theirs, occasion'd great Troubles to that whole Church and Nation. And very like to this is the *furious* and *disorderly* Zeal of *Sectaries* and *Enthusiasts* in our days, who under a pretence of higher Illuminations, and divine Inspirations, have greatly disturb'd the peace of Kingdoms, and by their fierce and eager Contentions about Religion, have endanger'd the loss of all: This hot *fiery* Zeal our blessed Saviour blam'd in some of his own Disciples, who, in a fit of Rage, call'd for Fire from Heaven,

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to consume the *Samaritans*; for which they receiv'd that sharp Rebuke, that *They knew not what manner of Spirit they were of*; they did not know or consider the true Spirit of Christianity, which was not to *destroy mens lives, but to save them*. So that a Zeal that is void of Charity, and insensible of the Publick Good, is certainly irregular; and when it transports Men beyond the bounds of Meekness and Sobriety, is inconsistent with true Religion: and therefore to set it right, it must be temper'd with Wisdom, and abound more in the *mild and good-natur'd Affections*, than in the more *vehement and wrathful Passions*, which are too apt to become inordinate: And these extravagant heats and transports in Matters of Religion, are the excess of Zeal, the mischief whereof is too visible to need laying open.

But 'twere well, if some Men did not offend as much in the *defect*, as others do in the *excess* of Zeal; and that the evil of the *one*, were not as dangerous as the mischief of the *other*: But alas! the miseries of *both* are too apparent to be either deny'd or disguis'd: For is not some Men's indifference and carelessness in Religion, as much short of *true Zeal*, as others fierce passions and contentions are beyond it? And is not *one* of these too often the cause or occasion of the *other*? Does not Religion suffer as much in the Lewdness, and want of Sobriety in *some* Men's Lives,



as by the inordinate *Zeal*, and unnecessary Rigours of *others*? And is not Atheism the plain consequence of the open looseness of the one, as well as the false and pretended strictness of the other? Of both these *our* unhappy Age affords but too many Instances, which may teach us to avoid both these Rocks, and to steer our Course between the fury of some Men's *Zeal*, and the scandal of others Profaneness.

Secondly, Another Error in *Zeal*, is when 'tis void of *Knowledge*, or acts contrary to it: this is a *blind Zeal*, which leads Men headlong into many extravagancies; and this is in a great measure owing either to the *ignorance* or *subtlety* of false Teachers, who seek to work on the *Passions* of Men, without rightly informing their *Judgment*; by which means they are taught eagerly to contend for, or against things, without understanding the goodness or badness of either. If you observe it, you shall find those many times the greatest *Zealots*, that are most ignorant; like the *Andabatae* fighting in the dark, and contending for they know not what, or why. St. *Paul* bore Record of some in his time, that they had a *Zeal*, but 'twas *not according to knowledge*: This is a Heat without Light, which tends rather to destroy, than to direct; true *Zeal* in the *Heart* is evermore guided by a true light in the *Head*, it begins with *Knowledge*, and is conducted by it; whereas

whereas false *Zeal* begins with the Affections, and commonly ends there, seldom going any farther than an ignorant and violent Passion.

Thirdly, There is a *counterfeit* and *hypocritical Zeal*, which warms only the *out-side*, and consists in a superficial shew of Piety and Devotion; it resembles the heat of a Feaver, that scorches the extreme parts, but leaves the Heart cold and unaffected: *Pone in pectore dextram, nil calet*: There is no heat or warmth at all within, even when it seems to burn and flame most without. Of this kind was the Zeal of the *Pharisees*, who *fasted* and *prayed, to be seen of men*, and did all their good Works meerly for Vanity and Ostentation; they had no *inward* Principle of spiritual Life or Motion, but were acted meerly by external Motives and Inducements: such are the superficial heats of too many *Zealots*, who seem all on fire without, when the Heart, like *Nabal's*, is as cold as a Stone.

Fourthly, There is a Temporary *Zeal*, which like a Vapour or Comet, *appeareth for a while, and then vanisheth away*: such was that of *Jehu*, who *drove on* furiously for a time, and destroy'd the Monuments of Idolatry; but being settled in the Kingdom, his *Zeal* for Religion was at end, and turn'd only to his own advancement. Such likewise was the Mercenary and Selfish *Zeal* of those, that followed our blessed Saviour *for the Loaves*,



*Loaves*, and kept with him while any thing was to be gotten by him ; but when that fail'd, they forsook and walked no more with him : This is a Flame that is blown in and out with the Wind, and varies with every blast. Again,

Fifthly, There is a *partial Zeal*, which makes Men warm in *some* Duties of Religion, and cold in others of equal necessity and importance ; and likewise very earnest in suppressing *one or more* Vices, and yet very favourable and indulgent to *others* equally crying and enormous. If you observe it, you will find some hot enough for *Preaching*, but cold for *Praying* ; and tho' they talk much of reforming of *others* Manners, are yet but too careless and negligent of *their own*. May we not see many great Enemies indeed to Idolatry and Profaneness, who yet are well enough reconcil'd to Sacrilege and Schism ? and make up that with advantage to one Vice, which they seem to take from another. This is to *compound* the Matter with God, and to make the keeping of one Law, atone for the breach of another. True and thorough Reformation extends to the hatred of *all* Vice, and the practice of *all* Vertue ; without which, the most zealous pretences to *Reformation*, are but falshood and hypocrisy.

Sixthly, There is a *busy pragmatical Zeal*, that carries private Men beyond the bounds of *their own* Calling and Business, and makes them in-

vade the Callings and Business of others, intruding into the Offices of Princes, Magistrates, Judges and Ministers; prying into and censuring the Actions of their Superiors, and dictating to those by whom they are to be govern'd: These are those *busy-bodies* mention'd by the Apostle, who meddle with things they understand not, and belong not to them: True Zeal makes Men study *to be quiet, and do their own business*, without thrusting themselves unseasonably into other Men's; it puts Men upon the study of *their own* Hearts, mortifying *their own* Sins, and reforming *their own* Lives, which is enough to employ the Zeal of the Best Christian: whereas 'tis too apparent, how some Men's Zeal prompts them to wander too much abroad, and to converse too little at home; hence you shall find them very fierce and forward in declaiming against the Sins of others, as if they had *none* of their own to amend or complain of; how frequently do they call to Heaven for Vengeance on *National* Wickedness, as if they had no *share* in the Guilt, and were secur'd from bearing a *part* in the Punishment of it? Yea, 'tis no new thing for them, to condemn that in others, which they allow in themselves; and to inveigh bitterly against others failings, when at the same time they easily overlook their own enormities: This is the guise and practice of too many Zealots, which may  
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carry something of the shew, but hath nothing of the substance and reality of True Religion.

Lastly, The *Zeal* commended in our Text, hath respect to *Things*, not *Persons*: 'tis good to be zealously affected always in a good *Thing*: A *Zeal* either for, or against *Persons* is commonly *factions* and *disorderly*: The *having some Men's Persons in Admiration*, and others in Contempt, hath occasion'd most of the Schisms and Divisions in the Christian Church: This was the great fault of the *Corinthians*, who by crying up one Teacher, to the decrying of another, fell into fundry Parties and Factions, which St. *Paul* sharply rebuked in them, tho' their Zeal ran mightily towards *himself*; for finding they had made *him* the Head of a Party, he severely check'd their partiality, and the more they sought to magnify *him*, the more he endeavour'd to lessen *himself*: *Who* (saith he) *is Paul?* and *who is Apollo?* *Who?* (saith an eminent Father on those Words) *why, they were some of the chief Apostles and Ministers of Christ:* And yet we find St. Paul not only *stiling himself the least of the Apostles, but the greatest of Sinners, to keep men from having too high thoughts and admiration of him.* And if it were strife and envying to set up for *Paul*, or *Apollo*, or *Cephas*; certainly it can be no true Zeal to set up for far inferior Persons.

This is a Matter worthy the consideration of

all such as have Men's *Persons* in admiration, running after different Teachers, to the great disturbance of the Church, which is the great misery and malady of *our* unhappy Age.

And now for the application of this Discourse; tho' many useful Lessons might be infer'd from it, yet I shall confine my self to *two*, which very naturally and easily flow from it. For,

If it be good to be Zealously affected in a good thing, then 1<sup>st</sup>. It must be *bad* to be Zealously affected in an *ill* thing; and 2<sup>ly</sup>. It can be no better to be *lukewarm* and *coldly affected* in a *good* thing: Of both which, that I may not trespass too much upon your patience, I shall speak very briefly. And,

1<sup>st</sup>. We may learn from hence, that 'tis *bad* to be Zealously affected in an *ill* thing: 'Tis a double fault, first to espouse a bad Cause, and then to be warm and zealous in promoting it; he that is out of the way, the faster he goes, the farther he goes out of it; and to set him right, he must go it back again, and mend his pace after: To rectify a bad Zeal, we must alter and unravel our former Course, and labour to *undo* all that we have done amiss. True Zeal is always *against*, and never *for* an *evil* thing; and therefore to be zealous for a *Party*, and hot in promoting *Faction* or *Division*, is to employ it in a very *bad* thing: To favour a *wrong* Cause, or discountenance a  
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good one, are *both* equally abominable; and he that is warm in *either*, is clearly out of the way, and can never *judge righteous Judgment*: to spend our Zeal in encouraging of *Schism*, and promoting *disorder* and *disturbance* in the World, is to put one of the *best things* to one of the *worst uses*; and therefore we find Zeal commonly compar'd to Fire, than which as no Element is more useful and reviving, whilst it remains on the Hearth, and keeps within its due place and bounds, so none is more pernicious and destructive, when once refusing confinement, it breaks forth and invades the House-top: For the same reason 'tis sometimes compar'd to the natural heat of the Body, which in its due temper and moderation, is the spring both of Life and Health, and the source of all vital Operations; but when it grows into excess, and breaks out into burning Feavers, it inflames the Spirits, and *sets on fire the whole Course of Nature*: Just so is it with Zeal, which, if duly plac'd and regulated, is the support and ornament of the Soul, fills it with a lively and vigorous Heat, and fits it for brave and noble Undertakings; but when 'tis misplac'd, or runs into excess, 'tis no better than Wild-fire, and sets whole Countries into a combustion; which shews what great care is to be taken, that it be guided with Knowledge, and plac'd upon right Objects, such as may be not only *materially*, but in *all* its circum-

circumstances found to be a good thing: To this end know, my Brethren, that tho' *Reformation of Manners*, where 'tis sincerely intended, and rightly manag'd, be a very *good* thing; yet where 'tis only pretended, to put the better face on Schism, and countenance Divisions, 'tis a very *bad* thing; and a true Zeal for the former may be well employ'd, to watch and prevent the designs of the latter.

2<sup>ly</sup>, As 'tis *bad* to be zealously affected in an *ill* thing, so 'tis no less so, to be *lukewarm* and *coldly affected* in a *good* one: This is that *Laodicean* temper, that is so hateful unto God, and so sharply rebuked by him; *I would* (saith he) *that thou wert either hot or cold*, but since thou art neither, but lukewarm, *I will spue thee out of my mouth*, Rev. 3. 15, 16. Indeed there is nothing more nauseous and loathsome unto God, than this *indifferent* temper, which being void of all true Love to him, and his ways, keeps Men from being true or faithful to either: *Love* is a *warm* Passion, and where 'tis fixed on any Object, will not suffer us to speak or act *coldly* about it; and therefore where Men are unconcern'd, either for the Sincerity, or Solemnity of God's Worship, 'tis plain they want that inward Principle, that should move them in his service, and can alone recommend them to him.



If we look abroad, we may find some too *indifferent* about the affairs of Religion; and like *Gallio, Care for none of these things*: Others are somewhat warmer, but withal mighty *wavering* and *inconstant*, halting between two Opinions; being Conformists one day, and Non-conformists another; and like so many *Proteus's* in Religion, still *given to change*: This is to *halt between God and Baal*, which the Prophet upbraids as a piece of great Inconstancy, willing Men to be more plain and steddy in their ways: *If the Lord be God follow him, if Baal then follow him*; he that looks two different ways seldom steers his course aright, and to halt between *two* Opinions, is to be *neither* sound nor firm in *either*: And therefore to be truly zealous, is to be *stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*; to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, and to adhere to the well-grounded Principles and Practices of true Religion, without turning from them, either to the right-hand or to the left: To this end let us *Love God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our strength*; knowing, that tho' God loves a *broken*, yet he hates a *divided* Heart; and when our Affections are thus settled on him, we shall be *Zealously affected always in a good thing*. In a word,

It being equally evil, to be zealous in a *bad* Cause, and lukewarm in a *good*, let us endeavour to avoid both extreams; and learn so to regulate and fix our Zeal, that it may be still placed on right Objects, kept within its due bounds, and directed to good ends: So shall this Sacred fire improve into a Celestial flame, that will be still burning in our Breasts towards God, and for ever derive upon us the blessed Influences of Divine Love: Which God grant for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honor, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for evermore.

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**FINIS**